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PP RUEHWEB

DE RUEHJMA #0535 0801625  
ZNY CCCCC ZZH ZUI RUEWMCE3016 0801614  
P 211625Z MAR 07  
FM AMCONSUL JERUSALEM  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 0000  
INFO ARAB ISRAELI COLLECTIVE  
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC  
RHEHNSC/WHITE HOUSE NSC

C O N F I D E N T I A L JERUSALEM 000535

SIPDIS

SENSITIVE  
SIPDIS

OPS - PASS TO A/S WELCH AND PARTY; NEA FOR FRONT OFFICE;  
NEA/IPA FOR WILLIAMS/SHAMPAIN/BELGRADE; NSC FOR  
ABRAMS/DORAN/WATERS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 03/19/2017  
TAGS: [PREL](#) [KWBG](#) [PBTS](#) [KHUM](#) [KPAL](#) [IS](#)  
SUBJECT: NEW CONSTRUCTION NEAR ALFE MENASHE SETTLEMENT

CLASSIFIED BY: CONSUL GENERAL JAKE WALLEES, PER REASONS 1.4 (B) AND (D)

11. (C) SUMMARY: CONSTRUCTION IS UNDERWAY FOR THE FIRST OF 50 HOUSING UNITS IN NOF HASHARON, NEAR THE WEST BANK SETTLEMENT OF ALFE MENASHE. POLOFF VISITED THE SITE ON MARCH 19. THE MAYOR OF ALFE MENASHE SAYS NOF HASHARON IS A NEIGHBORHOOD OF HIS MUNICIPALITY AND THAT THE NEW CONSTRUCTION IS AN EXTENSION OF THE EXISTING SETTLEMENT, NOT A NEW ONE. POLOFF OBSERVED THAT TRAVEL BETWEEN NOF HASHARON AND ALFE MENASHE REQUIRES CROSSING THE SEPARATION BARRIER TWICE AND THAT THE SHORTEST ROUTE IS A FIFTEEN MINUTE DRIVE. THE SECURITY CHIEF AT NIRIT, THE COMMUNITY INSIDE ISRAEL IMMEDIATELY ADJACENT TO NOF HASHARON, TOLD POLOFF THAT NOF HASHARON IS PART OF ALFE MENASHE'S ADMINISTRATIVE DISTRICT, BUT OTHERWISE COMPLETELY SEPARATE. THE SETTLEMENT WATCH OFFICER FOR THE ISRAELI NGO PEACE NOW SAID THE DEVELOPMENT OF NOF HASHARON, WHICH WAS APPROVED BY THE SUPREME PLANNING COUNCIL IN 2003, IS PART OF A LARGER PLAN TO CONSTRUCT HOMES BETWEEN ALFE MENASHE AND THE GREEN LINE. END SUMMARY.

VISIT TO NOF HASHARON  
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12. (C) POLOFF OBSERVED FIVE VILLA-STYLE HOMES ARE UNDER CONSTRUCTION AT NOF HASHARON ON MARCH 19. (NOTE: PHOTOS EMAILED TO NEA-IPA. END NOTE.) THIS COMMUNITY IS IMMEDIATELY ADJACENT TO THE TOWN OF NIRIT, AND ACCORDING TO ZVIKA, THE HEAD OF SECURITY AT NIRIT (INSIDE ISRAEL, FLANKING THE GREEN LINE), WILL HAVE APPROXIMATELY 50 VILLA-STYLE SINGLE-FAMILY HOMES. THE HOMES WILL BE OWNED BY INDIVIDUALS WHO PURCHASED THE LAND AND PAID FOR THEIR CONSTRUCTION. POLOFF DROVE BETWEEN ALFE MENASHE AND NOF HASHARON AND OBSERVED THAT THE FIFTEEN MINUTE TRIP REQUIRES CROSSING THE SEPARATION BARRIER TWICE AND DRIVING THROUGH TWO PALESTINIAN VILLAGES, RAS 'ATIYA AND WADI A-RASHA. ZVIKA ADDED THAT, WHEN THE CONSTRUCTION IS COMPLETE, ACCESS WILL BE THROUGH A GATE INTO NIRIT AND THERE WILL BE NO DIRECT ACCESS BETWEEN NOF HASHARON AND ALFE MENASHE.

NEW SETTLEMENT OR EXPANSION OF AN EXISTING SETTLEMENT?  
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13. (C) ELIAZOR HISDAI, THE MAYOR OF ALFE MENASHE, POSTED A LETTER ON THE SETTLEMENT'S WEBSITE CLAIMING THAT NOF HASHARON IS A NEIGHBORHOOD OF ALFE MENASHE AND THEREFORE AN EXTENSION OF THE EXISTING SETTLEMENT. YEHEZKEL LEIN, RESEARCH DIRECTOR FOR B'TSELEM, THE ISRAELI INFORMATION CENTER FOR HUMAN RIGHTS IN THE OCCUPIED TERRITORIES, TOLD POLOFF MARCH 21 NOF HASHARON'S ONLY CONNECTION TO ALFE MENASHE IS THAT IT IS LOCATED IN THE SETTLEMENT'S JURISDICTIONAL AREA, WHICH ALLOWS THE GOI TO CONSIDER IT A NEIGHBORHOOD OF AN EXISTING

SETTLEMENT, RATHER THAN A NEW SETTLEMENT.

¶4. (C) HAGIT OFRAN, SETTLEMENT WATCH OFFICER WITH THE ISRAELI NGO PEACE NOW, REJECTS MAYOR HISDAI'S CLAIMS AND TOLD POLOFF MARCH 19 THAT ALFE MENASHE IS NOT A TRUE ADMINISTRATIVE DISTRICT, WITH SEVERAL MUNICIPALITIES PAYING TAXES TO THE IT, BUT RATHER A SOLITARY MUNICIPALITY. LEIN SAID NOF HASHARON WILL RECEIVE MUNICIPAL SERVICES FROM NIRIT, NOT ALFE MENASHE. HOWEVER, LEIN SAID THAT BECAUSE NIRIT IS INSIDE THE GREEN LINE, NOF HASHARON CANNOT BE CONSIDERED PART OF THAT TOWN WITHOUT ISRAELI ANNEXATION OF THE LAND ON WHICH NOF HASHARON IS BUILT. (NOTE: THE RESIDENTS OF NIRIT FILED A PETITION IN 2004 OPPOSING THE CONSTRUCTION OF NOF HASHARON, SAYING THEY DO NOT WANT TO PROVIDE SERVICES TO THE COMMUNITY OR BE ASSOCIATED WITH WEST BANK SETTLEMENT ACTIVITIES. THE ISRAELI HIGH COURT OF JUSTICE REJECTED THE PETITION. END NOTE.)

PART OF A PATTERN  
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¶5. (C) OFRAN AND LEIN BOTH SAID CONSTRUCTION AT NOF HASHARON IS PART OF A LARGER PATTERN OF SETTLEMENT EXPANSION IN WHICH NON-CONTIGUOUS DEVELOPMENTS ARE GIVEN THE SAME NAME TO ALLOW THEM TO BE CONSIDERED ONE SETTLEMENT. OFRAN SAID THE CONSTRUCTION AT NOF HASHARON IS PART OF A LARGER PLAN BY G.B.F.-NADLAN CONSTRUCTION TO DEVELOP THE AREA BETWEEN ALFE MENASHE AND THE GREEN LINE. IN THE SAME LETTER POSTED TO HIS WEBSITE, MAYOR HISDAI DISAVOWED ANY CONNECTION TO OR KNOWLEDGE OF G.B.F.-NADLAN'S PLAN, ADDING THAT THE MUNICIPALITY IS ONLY DEVELOPING THE NEIGHBORHOOD OF NOF HASHARON.

COMMENT  
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¶6. (C) CIA METHODOLOGY DEFINES A NEW SETTLEMENT AS ISRAELI CIVILIAN CONSTRUCTION IN THE WEST BANK THAT MEETS AT LEAST TWO OF THE FOLLOWING THREE CRITERIA: 1) BE MORE THAN HALF A MILE FROM AN EXISTING SETTLEMENT; 2) REQUIRE INDEPENDENT ACCESS TO A MAJOR ROAD; AND/OR 3) HAVE A DIFFERENT IDEOLOGICAL AFFILIATION THAN A NEIGHBORING SETTLEMENT. THE COMMUNITY OF NOF HASHARON MEETS THE FIRST TWO OF THESE CRITERIA. IT IS MORE THAN TWO MILES FROM ALFE MENASHE AND REQUIRES A 15-MINUTE CIRCUITOUS ROUTE, CROSSING THE SEPARATION BARRIER TWICE AND TWO ARAB VILLAGES, TO REACH ALFE MENASHE. ACCESS TO A MAJOR ROAD COMES THROUGH NIRIT, A TOWN INSIDE THE GREEN LINE, NOT THROUGH ALFE MENASHE. BY THIS DEFINITION, THIS CONSTRUCTION REPRESENTS THE FIRST NEW GOVERNMENT-APPROVED, NON-CONTIGUOUS SETTLEMENT SINCE 1991. A NEW SETTLEMENT WOULD ALSO BE INCONSISTENT WITH THE GOI'S ROADMAP COMMITMENTS. ALLOWING THE CONSTRUCTION AT NOF HASHARON TO PROCEED UNCHECKED COULD ENCOURAGE OTHER DEVELOPMENT COMPANIES TO PROCEED WITH SIMILAR DEVELOPMENT PLANS. END COMMENT.

WALLES